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Vol. 10, of the Beauties of England and Wales, containing an Account of London and Middlesex; by Edward Wedlake Brayley, 1*l.* 3*s.*

The true sense and meaning of the System of Nature, a posthumous work of Helvetius; translated by D. I. Eaton 3*s.*

Scripture Geography with a large map of the Holy Land and 4 other maps coloured by John Toy 5*s.*

The method of teaching and studying the Belles Lettres, by Rollin a new edition 1*l.* 4*s.*

Rivington's annual Register for 1795. 18*s.*

NOTICE OF A BOOK TO BE PUBLISHED.

The Rev. Dr. Dickson is publishing by subscription, a Narrative of his sufferings, privations and inflictions, during more than three years and seven months confinement and exile, on the presumption of his being accessory to the insurrection in Ulster, 1798. Authentic documents will be inserted respecting the principal circumstances, from official papers, and the records of the Synod of Ulster, 8*vo.* 10*s.*

MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

"NEITHER to inflame, nor to lull into apathy," was our original promise. How far we have fulfilled our pledge, we leave to be determined by the pages of our Political Retrospect. It has not been our aim to introduce declamation on imaginary grievances, but to give from time to time a dispassionate view of the alarming situation in which we are placed, and to lend our aid to rouse, if possible, the people to a sense of the awful crisis, which is impending. For the more fully our situation is previously contemplated, the better we shall be prepared to choose the proper line for acting, when the crisis shall arrive. Forewarned of the danger, we are in a better state to prepare for safety. Those who are the most confident in fancied prosperity are generally the most alarmed and timid in the hour of danger, while foresight and a prudent anticipation of the future, prepare for the danger, and prevent the despair which often follows an improvident and thoughtless security. To reform, we are decidedly friendly. Things have arrived at that state, that reform must take place. The friends of peace and stability earnestly desire it may be brought about by peaceable means, and by a more general illumination of the public mind, lest "the reform with a vengeance," predicted by the great Lord Chatham should overwhelm us in common ruin. It has been the aim of the Political Retrospect to inspire a high toned morality, and point out virtue, as the proper basis of all reform, and especially to show, that the people to insure virtue in their

governors, must themselves be virtuous. Politics are too seldom contemplated in this point of view. The people too readily shift the blame on their rulers, who mostly are only the index which points out the state of public morals, while the people are really the moving springs of virtue, or of vice. To secure the benefits of a just and good government, the people must become virtuous, independent, and raised above the selfish and interested motives which too frequently convert this fair world into a scene of contention, and of each preying, or attempting to prey on his neighbour, when every one for himself, and few disinterestedly for the welfare of the public, is the prevailing motive for action. Rulers cannot be more severely blamed than others for following this almost all prevailing motive. Let the people begin the reform in themselves, and rulers will no longer find it their interest to be dishonest. But without laying the basis of public virtue, and of reform on the broad solid foundation of private virtue, there may be a change of rulers, and even a total change of forms, and yet, the inherent defects of vice will remain. For want of laying the foundation in private virtue, and in the gradual enlightening and improvement of the mass of the people, the French rapidly passed through the career of reform and revolution into anarchy, and subsequently into despotism. Enfeebled by the vices of their old government, and by their own vices, they had not strength of principle to support them and restrain them within the due and proper

bounds of a salutary beneficent reform. A few leaders were enlightened, but the mass of the people were uninformed.

They are the truest friends to their country, who incessantly labour to impress the necessity of virtuous principle, and on this foundation seek to inspire just and liberal sentiments as to the necessity of reform both private and public. It is of the highest importance, and is most likely to conduce to the public safety, that the people should become enlightened, and know their rights. Fortified by a knowledge of the extent of their rights, and by a virtuous principle restraining from transgressing the boundaries of justice, men will assert their claims with calmness, and a dignity inspired only by a sense of propriety. A people truly enlightened never were ferocious, while ignorance, or imperfect knowledge has always been dangerous. The first step towards producing salutary reform is to gradually enlighten the public mind by candid appeals to their reason and common sense, and the principles of common honesty. Appeals to their passions are dangerous. They should be especially incited, "on reason," and on reason only, "to build resolve." This only is "the pillar of true dignity in man."

Peculation in all its forms has met in the Belfast Magazine decided disapprobation, and the attempts to unmask this hydra have been frequent. But on this point also it is necessary to recur to the principle of individual virtue. Too generally

"Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,

Yet likes a slice, as well as he."

Peculators on the smaller scale have no right to blame more elevated peculators. Mankind also sometimes too readily indulge in a false compassion at the expense of a strict sense of justice, and with a misplaced generosity too easily acquit the delinquent. Hence vice loses its abhorrence, and the peculator is received again into the circle of his former acquaintance, and into the free intercourse of the world without the stamp of disapprobation being sufficiently impressed

on him, to show to himself his own turpitude, and to deter others from the commission of similar crimes. The ease with which speculators are permitted to enjoy their former station in society is a proof of the too great relaxation of morals among us. If the strictness of justice is remote from unreasonable severity, it is also inconsistent with that laxity of construction, which sets vice free from one of its greatest restraints, and absolves from the force of public shame.

The state of the finances, and of commercial credit has lately received a violent shock. For the low state of the latter the reader is referred to the commercial report. The crisis which occasioned the death of Abraham Goldsmidt, is perhaps as alarming an event to the government of this country, as the expulsion of our armies from Spain and Portugal, which may now be very shortly expected. Abraham Goldsmidt is a Jew, who lately shot himself on account of the loss he was likely to sustain by the last loan, for which he and Sir Francis Baring, recently deceased, were the joint contractors. These two men may be considered as standing at the head of what has been called the monied interest. The monied men have done very great injury to Britain. These men for the sake of gain supplied Pitt, and his feeble successors with money to carry on seventeen years of destructive and ruinous warfare, for while they could borrow with facility, they regarded very little the burdens of the people, or the means of future payment. These men on the Stock Exchange gave the yell of war in a loud huzza, on the failure of Lord Lauderdale's negotiation for peace in 1806. These men raised immense private fortunes on the dilapidated and gradually sinking finances of the country, weighed down by a most oppressive load of taxation, and a rapidly depreciating circulation of paper currency. While every man in the country lost from 15 to 20 on his capital by this depreciation; the holders of bank stock nearly doubled their shares, bank stock having risen after the bank was relieved from paying in specie, from

137, to 273, per cent. These men were the alarmists who so considerably contributed to lower the tone of public spirit in the country, and while they thought themselves snug, incessantly cried out, that all was well, and blessed that *happy* state of things, and praised that constitution which enabled them to live in luxury, while the middle classes were bowed under the weight of intolerable burdens. By a law of our nature no part of the body can long suffer without every part of the frame being forced to sympathize with the diseased part, and so in the body politic, these great minded men now have their day of suffering. In the words of Gray, that exquisite delineator of the passions,

"To each his sufferings, all are men,
Condemned alike to groan,
The tender for another's pain,
The unfeeling for his own."

He beautifully describes the effects of adversity,

"Thou tamer of the human breast,
Bound in thy adamant chain,
The proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone."

It has been endeavoured to represent the large discount to which omnium fell, or to which the various kinds of stocks given by the contractors for the last loan were reduced, as owing to the machinations of rivals in the money market, bearing hard against the contractors. But we must look deeper for the source of this distress, or to account for the loan falling from 6 to 10 per cent below the terms at which the contract was made. The extremely low state of private credit, called for large sums of money to aid those who were sinking under the pressure of commercial distress arising from the effects of war, and our exclusion from the continent. Consequently less money was in the market to lay out in stock; there were many sellers, and few purchasers. The report of the Bullion committee* had raised a

well grounded panic, and pointed out in forcible, and we think incontrovertible terms the dangers of the system of paper, and the actual depreciation, which, notwithstanding all the attempted glosses to the contrary has taken place. The depreciation is now acknowledged on high authority. The difficulty of raising another loan, will be forcibly felt on the meeting of parliament; expenditure must be lessened, and the crisis is rapidly approaching, when it is highly probable more money cannot be raised by loan, and in such a case the war cannot be carried on as heretofore. Government is fully aware of the insuperable difficulty, but in the mean time, the hiring prints are exerting every nerve to continue the popular delusion, of which this war in its various stages has been so productive. They now tell us of the system of taxation during the two last quarters having produced largely. The collectors of taxes both in Great Britain and Ireland, have been stimulated to great exertions in getting in the taxes. In Ireland the additional window tax of 50 per cent, has been rigorously exacted, and in Britain the tax-gatherers have not been idle. By the operation of the legacy tax, and the stamp duty on deeds of transfer in that country, it is calculated that once in every 20 years, one year's rental of the entire landed property of the nation will pass into the hands of government. It is impossible to discover on any ground of just reasoning, how increased and successful taxation can prove the wealth

our paper system. The following were the members,

F. Horner, esq.—H. Thornton, esq.—
W. Huskisson, esq.—H. Parnell, esq.—
P. Girell, esq.—W. Dickinson, esq.—
T. Thomson, esq.*—W. Sharp, esq.—J.
Abercrombie, esq.—Rt. Hon. G. Terney.
Rt. Hon. R. B. Sheridan.—Lord Temple.
A. Baring, esq.—J. Bradshaw, esq.—Rt.
Hon. C. Long.*—G. Johnstone, esq.—D.
Giddy, esq.—M. Doiens, esq.—W. Manning, esq.*—Rt. Hon. S. Peaseval.*—J.
L. Foster, esq.—T. Brand, esq.

Those marked thus * are stated to have been in the minority on the divisions of the committee: Lord Temple never attended, and Sheridan only once

* This committee was appointed last session of parliament. Their report has developed the mystery and insecurity of

and prosperity of a nation: yet this barefaced imposition is attempted to be played off, and such is the infatuated cullibility of the people, it meets with success with many. No deception is too gross for the unthinking million, or even for those who assume to be possessed of the powers of discrimination, but who nevertheless are the dupes to their prejudices.

This cullibility is the result of the state of modern manners, the effect of luxury, by which sincerity and sturdy principle are softened down into a supple pliancy very nearly akin to hypocrisy. The French courtiers thought all was lost when Roland appeared as minister without buckles in his shoes, because the practice was contrary to the etiquette of the court. Many now lest they should be mistaken for reformers, suit the cut of their opinions to the fashions of the times. The ancient character of independence seems in danger of being lost. Few like Andrew Marvel are contented to pick their mutton bone, and preserve their independence. Modern manners are well satirized in the last number of the *Edinburgh Review*. Do not such characters daily present themselves in every place of resort both for pleasure and business? "I here is a set of well dressed prosperous gentlemen—clean civil personages, well in with people in power—delighted with every existing institution—and almost with every existing circumstance."—These are not the men of stubborn stuff, whom Virtue by her discipline of self denial forms into the incorruptible patriots who are instrumental in preserving their country in the hour of danger. In the present crisis, where are we to look for the preservers of a tottering state?

The last anniversary of their national independence has been celebrated in the United States of North America, very splendidly by the republican party, who by their civic feasts, and the toasts given at those meetings wished decidedly to mark their sentiments, and to manifest that the spirit of liberty was still cherished in full vigour among them, while the federalists by their luke-warmness showed an indifference to the soul-cheering

principles of independence. They did not actually oppose, but they discovered great coldness and want of animation. The federalists appear to be biassed by their commercial views, of which Britain forms the center, and prefer foreign trade, to agriculture, and an extension of domestic manufactures. The republican party are jealous of independence, and are said by their opponents to be attached to French interests, though probably without just cause, as although complaining of the conduct of the British government towards them, they manifest no inclination to be the slaves of France. They prefer an American interest to either a French interest, or a British interest. Their newspapers on both sides of the question are extremely deficient in decorum, and in the language of good manners towards their opponents. Our transatlantic brethren appear even worse than ourselves in their manner of conducting controversies, and the two parties both in speech and print abuse each other in terms inconsistent with that decency which ought still to be observed between those whose opinions differ. It augurs ill of the civilization of any country, when abuse is substituted for argument.

A meeting of the freeholders of the county of Meath, was held at Trim, in which an address to the king was agreed to, complaining of improvident expenditure without any sincere and effectual measure of retrenchment, and of a harassing system of taxation, without receiving the benefits promised at the Union. It is pleasing to see a revival, however faint, of spirit in the Irish nation, and an attention to the affairs of the empire. Although in the present case the expression of public sentiment has not been as strong, as the alarming state of public affairs requires. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Earl of Fingal moved a vote of thanks to Lord Wellington for his recent victory. Prudence might have dictated to wait until the issue of the business was ascertained, but in popular assemblies there is often too great a liability to act on the spur of the moment, and to compromise a condem-

nation of part of a system by ill weighed praises bestowed on another part.

The county of Mayo has honourably come forward with a petition to parliament, in favour of Catholic emancipation. Few now openly oppose this measure, and as a proof of the progress justice is making, its opponents are forced to mask their views by conceding the propriety, but requiring terms to quiet suspicion. If Catholics relinquished foreign nomination for their bishops of their own accord, it might be an acceptable concession, and be the means of breaking one of their spiritual fetters, but they themselves should be judges in the case. Conscience ought not to be forced. He grants nobly, who grants freely. Conditions always imply suspicion, and lessen the obligation. The present mitigation of opposition now almost restricted to a question of terms shows the reluctant retiring of prejudice to its last hold.

A meeting of the freeholders of Kent was also held on the 22d inst. when the following petition to the house of commons was voted.

"We the inhabitants of the county of Kent, in full county meeting assembled, conscious of the rights we possess, of addressing and petitioning your honourable house upon all public affairs, and impelled by a high sense of the duty we owe to ourselves and to our country, beg leave to lay before you our opinions and sentiments on the present defective state of the representation of the people.

"To the wisdom and justice of the original design of convening in parliament the representatives of the people, to deliberate and co-operate with the sovereign and the peers upon every question of national concern, we give our unqualified approbation; but when we take into our consideration the decay of some Boroughs, once prosperous and well peopled, the rise and flourishing conditions of others, formerly of little note; when we reflect upon the effects of the heavy and insupportable expense of elections, which closes the doors of your honourable house to many of the best friends of their country, and robs it of their faithful service; when we think of these things, we are of opinion that your honourable house is at this time, by no means a fair representation of the people; and from the manner in which a large portion of the

individual members obtain and secure their seats in your honourable house, we cannot but infer that that high and sacred office, intended for the public service, is frequently sought for and procured by unconstitutional means, and is too often perverted from its original design, and rendered subservient to private ends. To this cause we ascribe the greatest part of the national calamities we now have to deplore. The mean principles, and narrow views which have too long governed the councils of the cabinet, the false ambition and little intrigues of its members, the continuance of a system of expenditure lavish beyond example, the many disgraceful expeditions, in which the blood and treasure of our country have been too prodigally wasted, the decisions of your honourable house in direct opposition to the general sentiments of the nation, the unwillingness hitherto evinced by your honourable house, to promote inquiry into, or correct abuses in the representation, an unwillingness which cannot fail to excite our distrust and to diminish the respect we owe to the name and functions of your honourable house. And we deplore particularly one instance of this unwillingness of which we complain, in your rejection of a motion made in the last Sessions of Parliament, by one of the Members of the County of Herts—as that motion, had it been adopted by your Honourable House, must necessarily have brought before your Committee a full inquiry into the present defective state of the Representation of the People, and thereby have led to a substantial Reform in the Commons House of Parliament, so essential to the salvation of the state, by restoring to us a free Constitution, that inestimable inheritance, transmitted to us by the wisdom and integrity of our ancestors.

"The times demand this open avowal of our sentiments, and in the language employed to convey them we intend no disrespect; though we are persuaded that no words can be too strong to express our feelings upon this occasion. Therefore, we most earnestly entreat your Honourable House to undertake, before it is too late, in a true and cordial spirit, the measure of Reform, upon principles which, by conciliating the affections of the people, and long restoring to your Honourable House its due weight and character, may rescue our country from domestic discord, and secure it from the foreign foe, give stability to the Throne, and perpetuate the Constitution."

The mover of the petition em-

phatically declared that a change of system, and not of ministers solely, was absolutely essential to the well-being of the country. The freeholders gave a good lesson to representatives. They directed the petition should be presented only by Filmer Honeywood, one of their members, as the other, Sir Edward Knatchbull had declined to promise to support it. Sir Edward was closely and spiritedly questioned by his constituents. There would be more virtue in the representative body, if electors thus faithfully discharged their duty. If the example of the men of Kent calling their representative to account for his conduct became general, much good would be done. In vain the people complain of corrupt representatives, if they themselves from timidity, indolence, or a fear to disoblige landlords, shrink from a spirited discharge of their own duty.

The common council of Dublin have unanimously announced their intention of celebrating another jubilee in honour of the Queen entering on the 50th year of her reign. Thus they hope to relieve the distresses of starving manufacturers. Such eleemosynary aid never did afford permanent relief to trade. It only tends to introduce profusion among those called the higher ranks, and servility among the poor, as donatives among the Romans marked real degradation of manners, and the decline of the empire. One of their orators declared that the last jubilee did more good, than ever was effected by patriotism. Debasing and degrading sentiment! They thanked both their sheriffs, although on the subject of the aggregate meeting, their conduct had been directly opposite. On their proceeding to discuss the Union, the Lord Mayor entered and dissolved the meeting. If they are resolved to do good, their patriotism must be of a firmer texture than their past conduct gives reason to expect. They must rise from local politics to a much more comprehensive system, if they aspire to the venerable character of enlightened patriotism, and true independence.

It may probably have been remarked by our readers that domestic politics

occupy the largest share of our retrospect. Is not this right? They more intimately concern us; peculation and corruption, our internal enemies, are likely to do us more injury than our external foes. United at home and cemented attached and by reform, in vain should we be assailed by the arms or arts of "Audacious France." Such is our apology for devoting so many pages to our domestic situation, in which an unceasing appeal, is made to display the highly important benefits of reform and to stir up the people to behold their true interests.

The Cortes of Spain have at length assembled, and their debates appear to partake something of the popular form. Though called so late, we earnestly wish it may yet be in their power to benefit their country, but time is necessary to see into the development of their views and characters. In one respect they have made a good beginning by adopting a self-denying regulation that no member of the present or any future Cortes shall, during their function or for one year afterwards, accept of any employment, pension, distinction or favour from the executive government.

Notwithstanding the highly vaunted victory of Busaco, affairs in Portugal do not wear a more promising aspect. They who recollect the deceptions so frequently practised, by which the horrors of General Moore's retreat in Spain were so long withheld from the public, and by which the battles of Vimiera and Talavera, were magnified into glorious victories, notwithstanding at the latter, the field and the military hospital were so speedily abandoned, will hesitate before they give full credence as to the extent of the victory of Busaco. The forebodings of evil will be still increased, when we find that notwithstanding this boasted victory, Lord Wellington continues his retreat, after evacuating Coimbra, which more recent accounts state to have been recaptured by the British. If by fighting a battle a retreat is secured, and the army reembarked, the friends to humanity will ask what advantage can accrue from such a waste of valour and such a profusion

of blood and suffering? To send troops on repeated expeditions, and in the end to have no other cause of rejoicing than that a part of them has been gotten off, is a most improvident waste of resources and a cruel addition to the calamities of war. In the mean time, every exertion is used by our public prints to put a fair gloss on the state of things, till Time, that great developer of events shews the real situation, and then as in the turning of the magic glass to prevent refection, attempts are made to turn the public mind hastily to some other subject, and thus the delusion is perpetuated, and sober reflection by every artifice is shut out, to prevent the people from examining into their state, and profiting by the lessons of past distressing events.

The remarks made at the close of the last retrospect on the Lancastrian School establishing in this town drew forth some angry remarks signed Solon. Whatever of argument was contained in that paper is published in this number, and so far the rights of free discussion are maintained. Whatever of abuse against the writers whose opinions Solon attacks, has been mostly suppressed. We promised to permit free discussion, but in our work, the bounds of decorum must not be transgressed by personal abuse, which is altogether irrelevant in pointing out errors or supposed errors. Railing is not argument, and writers greatly mistake, when they suppose the promote their cause by abusing their opponents. The writer of the remarks in the last retrospect on mature reflection finds no cause to retract the former sentiments he advanced. He is well pleased to find however that a second story is to be erected, as by this means, more room will be allowed for the girls' school. He still thinks there was a defect in the original plan by rendering it too expensive and that much might have been saved, by making rigid economy the first principle in the building. When application is made to the public for aid to an institution however, praise-worthy, all may not at once see alike and some reasonable objections may be started: and it is becoming to answer such objections as may be made coolly and without ran-

cour, using sound arguments if the case admit of them, but mild expressions. The opposite practice of abuse and attributing motives to their opponents, at the mere fancy of the writer is too common and in our view requires to be marked with decided reprobation.

In the present instance, if the wishes of the writer of the retrospect as far as regarded himself, had been gratified, he would have printed Solon's letter entire, to show how little abuse supports an argument, and how little he felt himself annoyed by the affected attempts at wit. But the pages of the magazine could not be conveniently spared for this exhibition, or for the reply, which must necessarily have accompanied. Besides such a precedent would have countenanced a practice which we wish all combatants in our pages should avoid. It is pleasing to hear that another Sunday School has been opened, and conducted in Belfast, by a public spirited individual, on the Lancastrian plan, and that upwards of seventy boys attend. Those smaller establishments are likely to be productive of much good. In them unity of design, which so essentially contributes to stability is more easily preserved. In more extensive establishments supported by large subscriptions, independence is often battered for support. The writer of this article is strongly impressed with the advantages of individual exertion on a small scale, even when general co operation is not to be expected. Much good may thus be done by a few in small villages, or situations in the country.

DOCUMENTS.

EXAMINATION OF W. M'KENZIE.

Continued from p 237. No. XXVI.

Q. Had you any knowledge from that book, or otherwise, why those five payments were selected as the particular payments, the receipts of which appeared to be lost?

A. They were selected as the result of the investigation I have stated, and I wish it to be distinctly understood, that my cause of knowledge respecting the five payments that were selected, arose out of that extract, which was made from the general account before described.